

American Literature

Beginnings

- I. Ice Age Travelers
 - a. Siberia to Alaska
 - i. They moved south
 - b. By the 1490's many American Indian groups
 - i. Largest = Aztec
- II. Europeans Arrive: The Explorers
 - a. 15th & 16th century was first recorded by Spanish and French
 - i. Recorded through letters, journals, and books
 - b. Explorers
 - i. Christopher Columbus 1451-1506
 - ii. Francisco Vasquez do Coronado 1510-1554
 - iii. Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca 1490-1557
 - 1. Was left for dead because they thought he was dead
 - 2. Wandered around for 8 years
 - 3. His narration of journey's of what is now Texas – very interesting
- III. Puritans
 - a. Arrived in 1620
 - b. By 1640 there were 20,000 Puritans
 - c. Very religious
 - i. Simpler forms of worship
 - ii. Church organization described in the New Testament
 - d. Believed that Adam & Eve damned most people, but Jesus Christ was sent to save some
 - i. People acted in a way to be saved.
 - e. They laid the way for American constitutional democracy
 - i. Mayflower Compact

Examples: William Bradford

- IV. Rationalism
 - a. 17th & 18th century

- b. Arrive at truth by reason, not the past, religion, or intuition.

Examples: Sir Isaac Newton

V. Smallpox

- a. Arrived April 1721 from a ship traveling from the West Indies
- b. Puritan minister Cotton Mather
 - i. Found that inoculation cured smallpox, not the Bible
 - ii. Created a change of thinking, even for Puritans

VI. Deism

- a. Believed that all people at all times could discover natural laws through their God-given power of reason.
- b. Didn't focus on one specific religious group, but the principles that united all religions.
- c. People were good and do good to others.